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ABSTRACT

A course was created at Pennsylvania State University to support graduate students in the field of education as they struggle with integrating the many fragmented perspectives developed over the course of graduate study into an integrative perspective that thoughtfully informs their qualitative dissertation research inquiry. The course presents the view that it is essential for the researcher to understand the beliefs, values, and life experiences that the researcher brings to the act of research. The course views learning as a developmental and constructive process, involving both the affective and cognitive domains, and the teacher's role to help students come to know themselves and understand the ways in which one's personal view of the world contributes to and constrains one's inquiry. With a focus on experiential, self-guided learning, the course consists of multiple special projects and individual as well as cooperative and interactive group activities. Learning about qualitative inquiry is nurtured through developing a community of learners, articulating a values continuum, discussing moral dilemmas/case studies, and participating in role play. A copy of the course syllabus is appended, followed by a 20-item "Qualitative Research Human Scavenger Hunt" for students to use in getting to know other class members. (Contains 27 references.) (JDD)

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# Holistic Perspectives on the Teaching of Qualitative Research Methods

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# Holistic Perspectives on the Teaching of Qualitative Research Methods

A major goal of colleges of education is to contribute knowledge to the understanding of teaching and learning through the conducting and reporting of research. A question that is often neglected is how those who conduct research come to understand what it means to inquire and produce knowledge in their fields. Those of us who work with graduate students as they complete their studies and begin their research careers have a tremendous responsibility for the future of the field of education.

In our work with graduate students at Penn State, we are often approached about serving as a member of their dissertation committees. When questioned by us as to the nature of the work they wish to pursue for their study, it is not uncommon to hear responses that indicate a lack of critical thought about the fundamental nature of educational research, issues that influence the conceptualization of a study, and expectations for dissertation studies. As many graduate students seek us out for our interest and knowledge of qualitative inquiry, the comments we hear are often associated with their understandings of the frequently discussed contrast between qualitative and quantitative approaches. We often hear comments such as, "I am not going to do a qualitative dissertation study because it will take too long and I need to get out of here," or "I want to do a qualitative dissertation so I do not have to deal with statistics." At first we found these comments to be somewhat startling, but upon reflection we realize that we shouldn't be surprised. Graduate students are often left to flounder as they struggle to put together the fragmented pieces of various courses they have taken during their studies to design and conduct their first research project.

Our experiences with graduate students provided the impetus for the creation of a course designed to support graduate students as they struggle with integrating the many fragmented perspectives developed over the course of graduate study into an integrative perspective that thoughtfully informs their inquiry. The basic premise of the course was to provide graduate students with a supportive atmosphere as they grapple with issues inherent in designing and conducting qualitative research and becoming a valuable contributor to the educational research community. To create such an atmosphere, we looked inward to our deepest beliefs about teaching and learning. Of primary importance was our belief that learning is a developmental and constructive process, and involves both the affective and cognitive. We view our roles as teachers as helping each of our graduate students to come to know her/himself and to understand the ways in which one's personal view of the world contributes to and constrains one's inquiry.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the nature of our experiences in working with graduate student researchers in a course that had a purpose of providing opportunities to learn about qualitative research design. Throughout the remainder of this paper we describe some of the approaches we decided to employ in order to assist students in coming to a grounded personal understanding of qualitative research in educational settings. As such, we are more concerned with reporting about our practices and relating those to multiple theoretical assumptions than offering a particular theoretical model from the start. We are cautious to not represent the approaches as "holistic approaches" as we want to affirm the notion that holistic education represents a

set of ideas; a worldview that guides one's practice. We concur with Miller (1991) who states:

> In an important sense, "holistic education" is not a methodology at all but a comprehensive worldview. It is an attitude toward teaching and learning, as well as toward culture and human development. It is a set of guiding values, which, to be implemented with integrity, call for much reflection and self-awareness on the part of the educator. "Holistic education" is not a curriculum—it does not offer complete answers; rather, it is a persistent question: What does it mean to be a human being and how can we make the most of our possibilities?
>
> Still, all educators face a very practical question every day of their professional lives: "What am I going to do today? I am responsible for a roomful of young people for six hours today, so what am I going to do with them?" Holistic theory may not give the complete answer, but it most certainly leads educators in particular directions. (p. 290)

The reader will find that we put forth the assertion that inquiry that follows in qualitative traditions is holistic in nature and that coming to understand how to engage in qualitative inquiry is a process of recognizing the enormous potentials one has to continuously learn no matter what context one finds oneself in.

## The Researcher in Qualitative Inquiry

As the primary instrument in qualitative inquiry is the researcher, it is essential that the researcher understands not only the nature of qualitative inquiry, but the beliefs, values, and life experiences that the researcher brings to the act of research. It is through the researcher's interpretive lenses that data are collected and analyzed. This idea is in opposition to the way many people intuitively view research. It would not be uncommon to hear that all researchers, no matter which techniques they employ, should enter the field *tabula rasa*, without lugging along any previous ideas, convictions, or premises. This assertion is absurd as it is impossible for any human being to exist in a meaningful way without any conceptions. Erickson (1986) states that, "We always bring to an experience frames of interpretation" (p.140). Furthermore, Eisner (1993) notes, ". . . humans do not simply have an experience; they have a hand in its creation, and the quality of their creation depends upon the ways in which they employ their minds" (p. 5). Therefore, essential to understanding the research process is the need to conceptualize research as a human enterprise and to recognize the integral role of the researcher in formulating and conducting a qualitative study.

Hence, a useful way to think about being a researcher may simply be to consider oneself a learner. Equating researching with learning offers some benefits in understanding the fundamental nature of qualitative modes of inquiry. Miller (1991) reminds us that from a holistic perspective "the purpose of education is to nourish the growth of every person's intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, and spiritual potentials" (p. 7). By viewing researching as a learning process, we can borrow from Miller's purpose statement and suggest that a major purpose of educational research may be no different.

To help students come to terms with who they are becoming as qualitative researchers, we developed course goals and learning activities that Miller (1991) might label as "holistic education in practice" (p. 291). With a focus on experiential, self-guided learning, the course consisted of multiple special projects, and individual as well as cooperative and interactive group activities. In order to support and encourage

students in their sense-making about qualitative research, we adopted the following guiding principles:

a. Outstanding educational qualitative researchers know and understand more than techniques, theories and methodological approaches to their work. Outstanding researchers know and understand themselves and how their own beliefs play out in their research.

b. Each graduate student is an individual who makes sense of what it means to conduct qualitative inquiry in their own way based on their prior knowledge and experiences. Therefore, each student's individuality is held in high regard.

c. Teaching techniques that allow students to clarify their own beliefs and understandings vis a vis what it means to be a qualitative researcher are important. Values clarification techniques ( e.g., Simon, Howe, & Kirschenbaum, 1978; Raths, Harmin & Simon, 1978); moral dilemmas (Kohlberg, 1984; Gilligan 1982) and cooperative learning techniques (e.g., Johnson & Johnson, 1984) are incorporated into the design of the course.

d. The dominant metaphor guiding the relationship between the instructors and the students is that of a facilitator. In being a facilitator of learning, it is our duty to use active listening techniques so that we honestly understand students' emerging ideas about themselves as qualitative researchers.

Specific course objectives included the following: (1) To develop mutually supportive relationships among class members as we struggle with issues inherent in designing qualitative research; (2) To explore various styles of writing up qualitative inquiry and to locate styles which fit with you as a researcher; (3) To conceptualize the design of a qualitative study and to understand the role of the researcher in the study; (4) To complete a written proposal for qualitative study including the following components: purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, literature review, methods and procedures; (5) To make personal sense of issues relating to the design and writing of qualitative research. A complete copy of the course syllabus appears in Appendix A.

Thirty-two students met with us for two hour time periods, five days a week for four consecutive weeks during May 1993. The intense time frame contributed to the graduate students and instructors forming a community of learners where they could grapple with their own understandings of themselves as qualitative researchers. Each week of the course focused on one theme. Themes included the following: (1) Qualitative Research Design and the Writing Process: Getting Started; (2) Focusing In: The Literature Review and the Theoretical Framework; (3) Formulating Methods of Data Collection and Analysis; and (4) Putting It All Together and Issues of Special Concern.

Within each theme, activities informed by values clarification and cooperative learning theories were created to help students come to a better understanding of themselves and their beliefs regarding qualitative research issues. These activities are described sequentially in the following section of this paper.

## Nurturing Learning about Qualitative Inquiry

Developing a community of learners. The most important course objective that would have to be achieved in order for students to be able to explore their own emerging beliefs and thoughts regarding qualitative inquiry was listed first: "To develop mutually supportive relationships among class members as we struggle with issues inherent in

designing and writing up qualitative research." To this end, it was important to develop a community of learners where students felt free to voice their opinions and thoughts regarding research, to openly discuss what they did not know about qualitative inquiry, and to "sound ideas" with their classmates and the instructors.

Unfortunately, a "community of learners" metaphor is often not the dominant metaphor guiding graduate study. A brief analysis of the metaphors that indeed dominate much thinking about graduate school and research is helpful in understanding the theoretical basis for the development of a "community of learners." Lakoff and Johnson (1980) discuss the nature of metaphor:

> (Metaphor) is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. The concepts that govern our thoughts are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details. Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If . . . our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor. (p. 3)

Indeed, metaphor is a powerful conceptual tool that can be used to understand the current state of educational practices (see, for example, Pineau, 1994; Bullough & Stokes, 1994). For example, Deal and Peterson (1991) state:

> Metaphors may provide "picture words" that consolidate complex ideas into a single, understandable "whole." Whether students and teachers think of a school as a factory or family will have powerful implications for day to day behavior. (Deal & Peterson, 1991, p. 26)

We contend that the metaphors graduate students and professors use to conceptualize advanced study have powerful implications for the development of the next generation of educational researchers. An analysis of common metaphors used during graduate students' completion of what is often their first major research project, the dissertation, are indicative of war. For example, graduate students "defend" their research proposals and dissertations, and create defensive strategies for dealing with the politics of committee members and an institutional bureaucracy. While researchers should be able to defend their ideas, the use of a defense metaphor in graduate school can be threatening and inhibiting to the development of future educational researchers. The process of defending is often nothing more than a concession to power. Professors, with authoritative privilege granted by society, tend to have the last word in this "battle." In contrast, a "community of learners" metaphor can enable graduate students and professors to think critically and analytically about meaningful educational problems, needed research, and the best possible methodological approaches to their work.

According to Barth (1990), a number of conditions appear to foster the development of a community of learners: "acknowledging one's own inadequacies, posing one's own problems, risk taking, humor, collaboration with other learners, compassion, the importance of modeling, and the presence of a moral purpose" (p. 44). Barth further contends that "communities of learners seem to be committed above all to discovering conditions that elicit and support human learning and to providing these conditions" (p. 45). We embraced the notion of a community of learners as the metaphor that should be a referent for our course design.

To develop a community of learners, we began on the first day by structuring time for students to begin to learn more about themselves and each other as well as assess where they are individually in terms of knowledge about qualitative inquiry. The first class opened with a "qualitative human scavenger hunt." Each student was given a sheet of paper listing a number of descriptions of people they were to "find" in the class. A few examples include:

- Find someone who has taken Dr. Jamie Meyer's Introduction to Qualitative Research Course
- Find someone who is a Counseling Psychology doctoral student
- Find someone who is a member of AERA's Qualitative Research SIG
- Find someone who has read Fred Erickson's chapter "Qualitative Methods in Research on Teaching" in M. Wittrock's *Handbook of Research on Teaching*
- Find someone who has been a participant in a qualitative study (a "researchee," not a researcher)."

A complete copy of the "Qualitative Human Scavenger Hunt" appears in appendix B of this paper. Students were given approximately 10 minutes to complete the scavenger hunt. Following, each description was discussed using a "values voting" technique (Simon, Howe & Kerschenbaum, 1978, 38-57). The instructors read each of the descriptions rephrasing them as a question beginning with the words, "How many of you . . . ?" Students raised their hands to answer in the affirmative. This approach provided a simple yet very rapid means by which each student in the class could make a public affirmation on a variety of aspects related to who they were becoming as qualitative researchers including courses that have been taken, conferences attended, and readings completed. Students could also quickly note classmates with whom they shared commonalties regarding qualitative research background, as well as appreciate the differences and diversity of each individual in the class.

Following this scavenger hunt, the students and the instructors used issues emanating from discussion of the human scavenger hunt to provide indepth introductions of themselves for the class. Additionally, students were asked to complete a data sheet including the following: name, address and phone number, degree being sought, major, major professor/advisor, research courses taken to date, previous experiences with qualitative research, area(s)/topic(s) interested in studying, and timeline for the remainder of their studies at Penn State. Following the first class, these data were used to place students into base groups.

Base groups, a form of cooperative learning, are described by Johnson, Johnson, and Holubec (1988) as:

> Long term, heterogeneous cooperative learning groups with stable membership. The primary responsibility of members is to provide each other with the support, encouragement, and assistance they need to make academic progress . . . The base group is the source of permanent and caring peer relationships within which students are committed to and support each other's educational success. (p. 84)

The base groups were heterogeneous in that each group contained graduate students who were in different programs at Penn State and who were at different points in their development as researchers. The heterogeneous make up of base groups allowed the graduate students to engage in dialogue with others who had very different experiences from themselves and, thus, helped them to come to understand the multiple facets involved in designing and conducting qualitative inquiry. The heterogeneous groupings

also encouraged the discussion of different points of view during the various small group activities students were engaged in during the course.

Base groups met with one another each Friday for a "writer's workshop." As the course progressed, students were asked to write one to two page "concept papers" at the end of each week to help them pace themselves and move along in proposal writing. Topics of these concept papers included "Purpose of My Study/Research Questions," "Literature Review," "Theoretical Framework," and "Data Collection & Analysis." Students were instructed to bring with them enough copies of their concept paper for all members of their base group. Base groups then read and gave feedback to each author in their group. The tenor of the feedback was not to dismiss or negatively criticize another's ideas. Rather, the concept paper sharing was intended as an opportunity for the writer and the reader to test their own ideas about research with each other and to seek clarification of ideas in an open and friendly manner.

Base groups were also used to structure the completion of a number of activities throughout the course. For example, during the first week of class, base groups were each assigned one chapter of Van Maanen's Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography. Each chapter focused on one of three genres Van Maanen describes for ethnographic writing: realist tales; confessional tales or impressionist tales. Base group then met to discuss their thoughts and impressions regarding their chapter and devise a way to present their chapter to others in the class.

This particular base group activity was a modified version of a cooperative learning strategy developed by Slavin (1981) called jigsaw. In jigsaw, each individual group has the responsibility of becoming an "expert" on a piece of material. "Expert groups" meet to learn and discuss and then teach their classmates. The strategy is useful in that it fosters dialogue among class members. Students are provided with an opportunity to personally make sense of a particular topic and then devise a way to help others come to understand that same topic. A sense of interdependence is created when groups depend on each other for different information.

Jigsaw was also used during the second week of class to explore the concept of theoretical framework development. Evelyn Jacob's (1987) article "Qualitative Research Traditions: A Review" which describes how traditions of qualitative research such as ecological psychology, symbolic interactionism, holistic ethnography, and cultural anthropology can be used in educational studies. The article was copied in pieces with one piece given to each member of a base group. Each member read their piece and then reported on it to their group using the framework: assumptions about human nature and society, foci of study, and methods.

Another form of jigsaw was implemented during the last week of class. After three weeks of reading, meeting, discussing, and writing, students were asked to list topics they knew they wanted to learn more about. We read through each individual's special concern and generated themes that emerged. The themes included: data analysis, case study, terms associated with research, sampling/choosing subjects, and document analysis. Students in the class then signed up to be a member of a "Special Interest Group" to study the particular theme, generate a short handout for the class including references, and report on that theme in the class.

Values Continuum. A values continuum is an opportunity to articulate one's own position on a topic in juxtaposition to other's opinions by placing oneself on a continuum where end points represent opposite extremes of the opinion. According to Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum (1978), the values continuum:

> serves to open up the range of alternatives possible on any given issue. Students begin to realize that on most issues there are many shades of gray, and they are more likely to move away from the either/or, black/white thinking which often occurs when controversial issues are discussed in the classroom. The continuum also encourages students to make public affirmations of their opinions and beliefs (p. 116).

Hence, the use of a values continuum on issues related to designing and conducting qualitative research may help graduate students come to understand that there is not "one correct way" to conduct qualitative research, or any research for that matter. Rather, research design and implementation is dependent on the theorists one follows and the personal beliefs one holds that emanate from an examination of various theoretical positions. The use of values continuums also help graduate students become aware of differing theoretical positions on issues related to qualitative inquiry, identify where they stand in relation to positions articulated by leading scholars in the field, and therefore justify their own approaches to their work.

For example, one values continuum that was used in the course dealt with the role and timing of the literature review in qualitative inquiry, an issue every graduate student must grapple with as they write a study proposal. Two readings were selected that represent different views on the role of the literature review. One selection was chosen from Merriam's (1988) Case study research in education: A qualitative approach (pp. 61-66). Merriam suggests that a literature review "interprets and synthesizes what has been researched and published in the area of interest" (p. 61) and "can help in the formulation of the problem, in the selection of the methodology, and in the interpretation of research results" (p. 63). In Merriam's review of several different purposes for the literature, she concludes that a review of literature allows for specific findings of previous research to be linked to the knowledge base. We used Merriam's passages to illustrate the way a literature review might be used in a deductive study where the researcher would thoroughly read the literature in the field to the fullest extent possible prior to engaging in data collection. In this case, the review serves to provide a foundation from which a framework for a study would emerge, dictating the proper approaches to data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

To contrast that view, a second selection was chosen from Strauss and Corbin's (1990) Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques. The premise behind a literature review in grounded theory, or inductive studies, is generally quite different. Data are collected first, they are analyzed, and then theory is generated. When the theory seems sufficiently grounded in the data, the literature is reviewed and the theory is related to the literature. In particular, this type of literature does not immediately focus on a particularly narrow sub-field to which all relevant studies are reviewed. The review usually begins with reading in related areas and gradually moves closer and closer to the area of interest.

Students in class selected a partner. Each pair of students received one set of the above readings. Students were instructed that both reading selections dealt with the role of the literature review in conducting qualitative research, but represented differing views. Each member of the pair should read one of the articles and then share the view represented in their piece with their partner. They then should discuss where they fall on the following continuum:

A thorough literature review must be conducted
before stepping into the field

TO

Literature should only be looked at after field work to confirm/disconfirm emerging theory

The continuum allowed students to articulate their view and to develop a rationale for that view. In particular students were encouraged to connect their position to other major foundations in their belief structure. A whole class discussion followed the paired activity

Moral Dilemmas/Case Studies. At the heart of examining who one is becoming as a researcher is examining how one solves ethical or moral dilemmas encountered during the research act. Often in graduate school, the ethics of research largely defines itself solely as "getting the paper work involved in using human subjects through the correct offices for approval." We contend, particularly for qualitative research, that ethics and morality can become much more complex then the typical issues and questions raised by human subject review boards at institutions. Students of qualitative inquiry need to understand the complexity of questions they may face, as well as the factors one may consider when solving a complex research dilemma.

In our work with undergraduates, we have found case study teaching to be a viable tool to raise prospective teachers' awareness of the complexity of teaching (see, for example, Dana & Dana, 1991, Dana & Floyd, 1993; Dana & Floyd, 1994). The case study approach or method can be defined as an instructional technique whereby the major ingredients of a problematic teaching situation are presented in narrative form to preservice teachers for the purposes of problem solving (Kowalski, Weaver, & Henson, 1990). Similar to their use with prospective teachers, we used case study teaching to help raise graduate student's awareness of the complexity of conducting qualitative inquiry.

We developed a case that raised a dilemma associated with the hoops graduate students must "jump through" in order to complete their study. Additionally, this case corresponded with the day's topic as it presented the different theoretical positions on the role of the literature review in qualitative inquiry. In the case of Susan James, a graduate student is caught in the middle of a disagreement on this issue between her major professor and one of her committee members. The narrative of this case read as follows:

> Susan had completed her coursework for her Ph.D. degree at Bright Ideas University in three years. Following her coursework, she successfully wrote and defended a prospectus for the first qualitative study to be completed in her department. As she was "breaking new ground" by using different methodology to conduct her research, she found the process to be quite arduous and painful at times. On other occasions, however, she was excited and exhilarated about the work she was doing.
>
> After four months of data collection, Susan worked full-time on her dissertation. Heeding Harry Wolcott's advice about not seeking "feedback" too soon in her writing, she completed a rough draft before presenting it to her dissertation advisor. Her advisor was supportive and made many editorial comments on her first and subsequent drafts. One of the major revisions suggested by Susan's major professor was to reorganize the literature. Susan had used quotes from literature to support the assertions she reported based on her data. Every place where literature was quoted, Susan found a red mark made by

her professor saying, "Move to chapter 2—Chapter 2 is the place for the literature review."

Susan, on a time line to finish as she had secured a job as an assistant professor at another university, revised her dissertation based on her major professor's suggestions. After three more revisions, her major professor was pleased with Susan's work and suggested that Susan hand out her dissertation draft to her committee members, contact them, and set a defense date.

Two weeks prior to the defense date, Susan decided to call each of her committee members to see if they had read her draft. When she contacted her outside committee member (a faculty member in the Educational Research Department), Susan was informed that she would consider her dissertation in its present form unacceptable. "For one thing," Susan was told, "When you are conducting qualitative research, literature should be woven throughout your analysis sections. It should not be placed in a separate chapter. It's ridiculous to have a traditional Chapter 2, Review of the Literature, in a qualitative work."

Susan slowly hung up the phone. She wondered what she should do now.

The case was followed by the following discussions questions: (1) You are Susan, how do you feel? How could she have avoided this scenario? (2) The two professors on Susan's committee present two extreme points of view regarding the role of the literature review in qualitative inquiry. With whom do you agree and why? and (3) What would you do if you were in Susan's situation? Graduate students discussed the scenario in base groups. Base group discussion was followed by whole class discussion. This particular case highlighted the tensions graduate students may encounter as they conduct their dissertation study.

The second case discussed was more concerned with ethical dilemmas of conducting research. The case entitled "Clash of the Cultures: Conducting School-Based Research" (Dana, Tippins, Dana, Koballa, Meadows, & Nichols, 1993) illustrated the story of Dr. Lamar, a forty-two year old assistant professor nearing her sixth year review at "publish or perish" Comprehensive University. Dr. Lamar invited a group of three teachers at a local elementary school to engage in a collaborative research project. One of the teachers commented that she was excited about and agreed to do the project because of Dr. Lamar's willingness to let all the teachers decide what the focus of the research project will be. The teachers met and decided to study students' misconceptions about why we have seasons.

Simultaneously to the teachers' meeting, Dr. Lamar reflected on the collaborative adventure. Her thoughts included the fact that she had only one more year at Comprehensive University before she was promoted to associate professor with tenure or asked to leave. With a publication record she described as "not outstanding," Dr. Lamar would strive to get at least three publishable papers out of her collaborative projects with the teachers. Dr. Lamar decided that she would direct the teachers towards doing a project on alternative forms of science assessment, as this was her research interest. She prepared a proposal and presented it to the teachers at a meeting the following week. The teachers gave Dr. Lamar's proposal a cold reception as they believed they were to select the problem to investigate, and had already met and chosen an area they were interested in pursuing. The teachers expressed feelings of frustration.

Each of these cases provided a forum for graduate students to consider an authentic situation they might encounter in their own lives. The rich descriptions in the

cases allowed for multiple personal theories and understandings to be brought forth in the discussions of the case scenarios. The cases offered an opportunity for students to see beyond the technical issues to getting a study approved or designing a particular data collection technique to larger issues of ethics and human relationships.

Role Play. Role play occurs when students "assume roles voluntarily to enact interpersonal situations where the outcome is undetermined" (Woolever & Scott, 1988). Two of the most noted scholars in the area of role play are Fanny and George Shaftel. According to Fanny Shaftel, role playing "is a group of problem-solving procedures that employs all the techniques of critical evaluation implied in the terms 'listening,' 'discussion,' and 'problem solving' and is akin to the research procedures which behavioral scientist term simulation and theory of games" (Shaftel, 1982, as cited in Nelson, 1992).

To stimulate listening, discussion, and problem solving regarding the proposals each member of the class completed at the close of the course, we spent one of the last days of class engaging students in role playing "mock proposal committee" meetings. Each student was placed in a group with three to four of their peers. We instructed the students that proposal committee meetings vary based on specific protocol and traditions for each department and the wishes of the dissertation advisor. We suggested that each student meet and talk with their advisor regarding his/her procedures for a proposal meeting in their area. We then provided students with the following suggested protocol to follow for role play:

1. One student at a time takes a turn at playing him/herself at his/her proposal meeting. All other members of the group play "committee members."

2. "Committee members" listen to approximately a 10 minute overview of the "student's" study. We suggest that each "student" prepare one to three visuals to help guide their explanation. At an actual proposal meeting, these can be shared on an overhead projector. For the purposes of your mock proposal meeting, please bring enough handouts of your visual(s) for your "committee members."

3. "Committee members" raise questions of the student regarding the proposed study. We suggest that each time a "student" presents, each member of the committee asks at least one question of the "student." Question and answer sessions should last approximately 15 - 20 minutes for each "student."

There exist multiple benefits to enacting a proposal meeting through role play. By playing himself or herself at the proposal meeting, a graduate student is given the opportunity to articulate what his or her study is about. The preparation for and the giving of an oral presentation allows the student to reflect on a study as a whole, possibly identifying strengths and weaknesses. The identification of strengths and weaknesses also plays out in the role play itself as students answer questions posed by "committee members." By playing the role of "questioning committee member" at the proposal meeting, students are helped to gain insight into the logic and value of qualitative inquiry, which in turn can help students better articulate and explain their own studies.

## Conclusions

A holistic perspective on the teaching of research methods creates spaces for graduate students to come to fuller and richer understandings of what it means to design and conduct educational research. Since a primary goal of teaching graduate students should be to help future scholars to develop perspectives that situate themselves in the

context of the larger research community, a safe and nurturing learning environment in which students can interact with each other and major ideas from the disciplines can be challenging and exciting. In any learning situation it should be a goal of the teacher to build on the prior knowledge of the learner. In graduate courses, the learners' prior knowledge is generally quite "deep" and varied. A wonderful richness of experiences comes into play when students make sense of the ways in which new scholarly knowledge is generated through research, Embracing a holistic perspective in the education of graduate students shifts the focus of instruction to creating opportunities for students to experience success, thereby fostering in graduate students a positive self concept and image of themselves as researchers, writers, and professionals who can contribute knowledge to their field. Graduate students become young researchers who are not merely technicians, but who are well aware of who they are and what they believe in as they embark on their research careers.

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## Appendix A
## Course Syllabus

# Designing and Writing Up Qualitative Research

**C & I 597B**
**Summer 1993 -- Intersession**
May 10 - June 4, 1993
Monday - Friday 2:00 - 4:00
Room 208 Chambers Building

**Instructors:**

Dr. Nancy Fichtman Dana
155 Chambers Building
865-6568 (office)
234-0656 (home)
**Office Hours:** Monday 11-12
and by appointment.

Dr. Thomas M. Dana
160 Chambers Building
865-1500 (office)
234-0656 (home)
**Office Hours:** Tues. & Wed. 1-2
and by appointment.

## Course Overview:

The overall goal of this course is to provide graduate students with a supportive atmosphere as they grapple with theoretical and practical issues related to designing, implementing, and writing up qualitative research. Questions we will explore and discuss over the four-week session include:

- In what ways do conceptualizing, designing, and writing up qualitative studies differ from quantitative studies?
- What style and form might my writing take (i.e., realist tales; confessional tales; impressionist tales)?
- What is a theoretical framework, how do I develop one, and why is it important in my study?
- How does a literature review fit into qualitative inquiry? To what extent should a literature review be completed before, after, or during fieldwork?
- How does the researcher's own subjectivities and biases play out in the design and reporting of qualitative research?
- Once I complete my dissertation, what outlets will there be for presenting and publishing my qualitative research?

Each class will engage students in hands-on activities and discussions designed to help students make personal sense of the questions posed above. In addition, a number of days will be reserved as writing workshop days where students can consult with each other and the instructors on their proposal.

## Course Objectives:

1. To develop mutually supportive relationships among class members as we struggle with issues inherent in designing and writing up qualitative research.

2. To explore various styles of writing up qualitative inquiry.

3. To conceptualize the design of a qualitative study including the following components: purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, literature review, methods and procedures.

4. To complete a written proposal for a qualitative study including the following components: purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, literature review, methods and procedures.

5. To explore issues relating to the design and writing of qualitative research through class discussion and written reflections. Issues may include but will not be limited to the following: role of theoretical framework; role of literature review, researcher subjectivity and bias, ethics of qualitative inquiry, outlets for publishing qualitative research, and defending the value and logic of qualitative inquiry.

**Texts:**

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. (1989). *Designing qualitative research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Wolcott, H. F. (1990). *Writing up qualitative research..* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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Seidman, I. E. (1991). *Interviewing as qualitative research.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Although this book focuses on phenomenological interviewing as a design, it was written with doctoral students in mind and addresses topics such as "research proposals as rites of passage." Therefore, although specific readings will not be assigned from this text during class, it is strongly recommended as a supplement to the readings assigned, whether or not you are completing an interview study.

Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods.* Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.

To be used as a handbook or guide, especially for students new to qualitative inquiry. Specific readings will not be assigned. Students may use as a supplement based on their individual needs.

**TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE:**

| DATE | TOPICS | READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS DUE |
|---|---|---|
| **WEEK ONE: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN AND THE WRITING PROCESS: GETTING STARTED** | | |
| May 10 | Getting To Know One Another: Human Scavenger Hunt<br><br>Assessing Our Prior Understandings and Knowledge<br><br>Overview of Course | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| May 11 | Getting Started: Where do I Begin?<br><br>Thinking Ahead: What Form Might My Writing Take? | Wolcott 9-36<br>Marshall & Rossman 9-20<br>Bogdan & Biklen 75-77<br><br>1. Complete the following: The purpose of my study is. . .<br><br>2. Write a tentative "to do" list that will allow you to do a study to accomplish your purpose.<br><br>Bring to class: Tales of the Field |
| May 12 | Forms of Writing Jigsaw<br><br>Developing the Research Questions | Complete Tales reading assignment from 5/11 and bring text to class..<br><br>M & R 21-44. Bring with you up to five research questions for your proposed study. |
| May 13 | More Practice on Conceptualizing Qualitative Inquiry Design -- A Real Live Example<br><br>Guest: Dr. Don Sheffield | Readings on your own to inform your particular study |
| May 14 | Writers Workshop & Library Time | "Skeleton Paper" - Put together your purpose, "to do list", and questions into a 1-2 page concept paper describing/proposing your study.<br><br>Wolcott 36-55 (in preparation for first writer's workshop) |
| **WEEK TWO: FOCUSING IN -- THE LITERATURE REVIEW AND THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK** | | |
| May 17 | Discussion: The Role of the Literature Review -- The Case of Judy Smith<br><br>Reviewing Conference Papers and Journal Articles -- How do these folks incorporate literature into their work? | Readings and Assignments during this week are your own choice to inform your own study. Work on your lit review/theoretical framework concept paper(s) throughout this week.<br><br>Bring a conference paper or journal article from your field of interest that uses a qualitative approach. |
| May 18 | Library Reading/Writing Day. Instructors will be available in the classroom to consult and answer questions. | Read literature that will inform your study. |
| May 19 | Activity -- Making Sense of the Concept: Theoretical Framework | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| May 20 | Jacob Article Jigsaw<br><br>Case: In Search of a Theoretical Framework<br><br>Building Your Own Theoretical Framework | |
| May 21 | Library Reading/Writing Day. Instructors will be available in the classroom to consult and answer questions. | Read to build your theoretical framework.<br><br>Complete work on your lit review/theoretical framework concept paper(s). |
| **WEEK THREE: FORMULATING METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS** | | |
| May 24 | Writer's Workshop Day --<br><br>Sharing Literature Review/ Theoretical Framework Concept Paper(s) | Read during this week:<br>M & R Chapters 3 & 4<br><br>On your own reading to inform your own study (data collection and analysis) |
| May 25 | Interviewing | |
| May 26 | Participant Observation & Document Analysis<br><br>Analyzing Possibilities | |
| May 27 | Human Research Subject Forms at Penn State | Work on 1-2 page concept paper explaining your methods of data collection and analysis. |
| May 28 | Library Reading/Writing Day and Writer's Workshop. | Continue to work on concept paper and/or bring completed paper to class for workshop. |
| **WEEK FOUR: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER AND ISSUES OF SPECIAL CONCERN** | | |
| May 31 | No Class Meeting -- Memorial Day | No rest for the weary -- Work on synthesizing concept papers completed to this point into a proposal draft. Due Thursday June 3!<br><br>Wolcott 55-81 (On writing the entire dissertation) -- Read during this week OR on your own after class ends, you've successfully defended your prospectus, collected and analyzed data, and you are writing up your dissertation! |
| June 1 | Special Concerns<br><br>Ethics in Qualitative Inquiry -- Constructing Cases for Analysis | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| June 2 | Special Concerns<br><br>Publishing Qualitative Research | <br><br>Wolcott 82-90 |
| June 3 | "Mock Proposal Meeting" | M & R 144-153<br><br>Proposal Draft Due. |
| June 4 | "Mock Proposal Meeting" continued.<br><br>Wrap Up<br><br>Celebration of Learning | |

**Course Assignments and Evaluation:**

25% Attendance and Participation in class. This class is organized in a seminar/workshop setting with many small and large group class activities taking place during class sessions. Your attendance in class is required for your classmates' and the instructors' learning as well as your own learning.

25% One to two page "concept papers" This assignment is to help you pace yourself and move you along in your proposal writing. There will be three or four papers: Skeleton Paper; Literature Review; Theoretical Framework; Data Collection & Analysis. The concept papers will not be evaluated by the instructors. Rather, they will be shared and discussed with classmates and/or the instructors during class times designated as "writing workshop."

25% Brief dated reflection log of your emerging thoughts regarding qualitative inquiry based on class sessions, your readings, your writings, and/or other experiences. As this course is designed to help you make sense of designing and writing qualitative proposals through activities designed to help you make sense of qualitative inquiry, keeping track of your thinking can help inform your work. In addition, logging your thoughts will help the instructors make sense of the process you are experiencing and therefore, better plan course activities and time. On certain days, the instructors may suggest questions to help guide your reflections.

25% Study Proposal Draft. This assignment may be completed by combining and elaborating on concept papers written earlier in the course. The progress you make on the final draft proposal will be dependent on "where you are at" when you begin the class, as well as how much on your own reading and writing you can accomplish in our intense four week session. Therefore, each student's proposal will be at a different state of completion. However, this assignment should serve to get every student well on their way to designing and writing up qualitative inquiry!

**Appendix B**

**Qualitative Research**

**Human Scavenger Hunt**

**C I 597 B**
**Designing and Writing Up Qualitative Research**
N. F. Dana & T. M. Dana

***QUALITATIVE RESEARCH***
***HUMAN SCAVENGER HUNT***

Course Objective # 1: To develop mutually supportive relationships among class members as we struggle with issues inherent in designing and writing up qualitative research.

Step # 1 To Achieve Objective #1: Getting to know class members.

Instructions: You have 10 minutes to complete the following scavenger hunt. Your objectives as you search for classmates who fit the following descriptions are twofold: (1) Meet and introduce yourself to as many NEW acquaintances as possible; (2) Find out some new information about classmates you already know.

1. Find someone who has read Bogdan & Bicklen's *Qualitative Research for Education.*

_____

2. Find someone who is a Counseling Psychology doctoral student.

_____

3. Find someone who took Dr. Jamie Meyer's Introduction to Qualitative Research course. _____

4. Find someone who is "brand new" to qualitative inquiry. _____

5. Find someone who has attended a Qualitative Research Interest Group (QUIG) conference at the University of Georgia.

_____

6. Find someone who subscribes to the journal *QSE: Qualitative Studies in Education.*

_____

7. Find someone who is a Curriculum and Instruction student, Curriculum and Supervision Emphasis Area. _____

8. Find someone who has already started writing their dissertation proposal.

_____

9. Find someone who has attended Ethnography Forum at Penn.

_____

10. Find someone who is a member of AERA's Qualitative Research SIG.

_____

11. Find someone who has read a good ethnography in the last 6 months.

Person: _____ Name of Ethnography _____

12. Find someone who is interested in phenomenological interviewing.

_____

13. Find someone who has already "gained access" to a research site.

_____

14. Find someone who is interested in combining qualitative and quantitative methods for their dissertation study. _____

15. Find someone who has read Fred Erickson's chapter "Qualitative Methods in Research on Teaching" in M. Wittrock's *Handbook of Research on Teaching*.

_____

16. Find someone who is interested in symbolic interactionism. _____

17. Find someone who is interested in conducting a case study. _____

18. Find someone interested in action research. _____

19. Find someone who has been a participant in a qualitative study (a "researchee," not a researcher). _____

20. Find someone who has experienced "writer's block" sometime in their graduate school career, and is not sure how to get going on his/her dissertation proposal.

_____